

Old Court House
Camden, South Carolina

HABS No. 13-9

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. 13

Historic American Buildings Survey
Samuel Lapham, District Officer
42 Broad St. Charleston, S.C.

OLD COURT HOUSE
Main and King Streets, Camden
Kershaw County
South Carolina

Owner: City of Camden.

Date of Erection: About 1826.

Architect: Robert Mills.

Builder: Not given.

Present Condition: Fair.

Number of Stories: Two.

Materials of Construction: Brick and stucco.

Other Existing Records: See text.

Additional Data: See following pages.

OLD COURT HOUSE
CAMDEN, SOUTH CAROLINA

SURVEY NO. 13-9

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The Old Court House at Camden is ~~of the Greek~~
Revival style, and ^{was} built about 1826, Robert Mills being
the architect.

The following is the description of the building at
present, as given by Mr. J. Whitney Cunningham, squad leader:

Exterior walls of brick, stuccoed and marked off to
represent stone; columns of brick, stuccoed and fluted,
original columns were of sandstone; cornice and entablature
of wood; wood shingle roof; interior walls of brick,
plastered; groined vaults of brick, plastered, on first
floor; barrel vault in corridor of first floor; frame
partitions on second floor between jury rooms, plastered;
floors of first floor are brick, herringbone; walls and
ceiling of first floor white washed; walls of second floor
painted cream; ceiling of second floor is wood stained dark
oak and varnished; stucco is finished in buff color;
exterior woodwork is painted dark brown; interior woodwork
on first floor is painted dark gray; interior woodwork on
second floor is painted white, except judge's bench and
council stalls which are varnished, stained dark oak; floors
on the second floor are painted dark brown; paneled shutters
on first floor are covered with tin painted brown; about
half of the second floor blinds are missing; front steps
and exterior door sills are of granite; window sills are
of sandstone; a brick walk encloses building.

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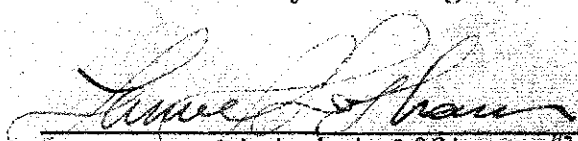
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To be compared with this description is the account given by Mills himself, in his "Statistics":

"An elegant court-house is now building here, which will be superior in its design to any in the state, both for convenience of accommodation, beauty and permanency. Its facade presents a grand portico of six Ionic columns, spreading the whole extent of the building, and rising so high that the main roof will cover it, and constitute its pediment. The offices (six in number) occupy the lower or basement story, arched with brick, and made fire-proof: a double flight of stairs rises within the vestibule to the court-room story, which occupies the most of the second floor: the jury-rooms on this floor are so disposed as to admit the galleries to extend over them. Four columns rise in this court-room, carrying their imposts, between which springs a grand arched ceiling, the whole width of the room, and extending its entire length. Including the portico, the building is 62 feet long, and 43 feet wide. The roof is proposed to be covered with metal, (copper or zinc,) so that a permanency and security from fire will be given to the whole edifice; the walls are of brick."

As constructed in 1826 the portico was supported by six columns of the Ionic style, made of brown sandstone. In 1847 changes were made in the interior and porch, the six Ionic columns being replaced by four much larger ones of the Doric order. The body of the building remains the same. The old Ionic capitals were used as carriage landings at various points around the town. In 1906 a new Court House was erected up town and the old Court House was purchased by the Hobkirk Hill Chapter of the D. A. R. It has recently been deeded to the City of Camden.

Sources of information: "Statistics of South Carolina", by Robert Mills, Hurlbut and Lloyd, Charleston, 1826.
Notes drawn up by squad leader, Mr. J. Whitney Cunningham


District Officer #13

Revised 1936, H.C.F.